

Sample letter to an elected official:

Dear Sen./Rep. (Insert name)

I am concerned about the bills, Senate Bill 246 and House Bill 4582, before the Legislature that would guarantee annual funding increases for public education in Michigan.

While I'm always glad to see public education do well in the budget process, the money to pay for this proposal has to come from somewhere. One estimate of the proposal that is being pushed by public education special-interest groups would cost more than \$1.5 billion in the first year. As someone familiar with the state's budget problems, I know you realize the state doesn't have an extra billion dollars anywhere.

The cost will mean cuts to state services that my neighbors and I depend on. But because I know that cutting government programs such as Medicaid, road building and prisons generally proves impossible, the money likely will come from higher taxes. This is exactly what Michigan doesn't need as we now have the one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation.

One possible solution to get more money into classrooms would be to look at reforms of the health care and retirement systems for public education employees. The costs of these are skyrocketing and Lansing lawmakers should have an open mind about changing the system.